



County of San Diego

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FOOD AND HOUSING DIVISION

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Food Safety at Community Gardens

Water Quality

1. It is recommended that water used for irrigation be obtained from a public water system or wells that have been tested and shown to be free from pathogens. Alternative water supplies including recycled water, graywater and rainwater can be considered as an irrigation source but due to the potential health risks associated with these supplies, additional requirements apply. Please see the "[Guidelines for the Use of Alternative Water Supplies to Irrigate Gardens](#)".
2. Locate garden in an area with the least potential for coming in contact with water from contaminated runoff. This will help prevent water runoff from other irrigation practices or contaminated rainfall from coming in contact with your culinary garden.

Septic Systems

3. Gardens should not be planted over septic systems or leach fields.

Presence of Animals

4. Efforts shall be maintained to exclude animals, including domestic animals, from the growing area of the garden.
5. Animal waste should not be used in culinary gardens.

Pesticides

6. Pesticides should not be applied on or around gardens without first contacting the County Agricultural Commissioner (CAC). Gardens claiming to be organic must register with the CAC prior to beginning operations. The CAC can be reached by calling 858-694-2739.

Compost

7. Compost applied to culinary gardens may not contain animal fecal materials. It is recommended manure to be used on a culinary garden is commercially processed.
8. Composting of food waste on site may require additional solid waste facility permits. Contact the local solid waste enforcement agency for more information. For more information, see "[Composting Tips](#)".

Sanitary Practices

9. Gardening and harvest equipment must be maintained in a clean condition and stored in a sanitary location. Dedicated equipment should be solely used in the garden and not used for other purposes on the property.
10. Minimize vegetation at the edges of vegetable patches to prevent harborage places for rodents and insects.
11. Maintain the grounds surrounding the garden in such a manner that pests are not attracted to the area.

Worker Sanitation

12. Workers harvesting produce from culinary gardens must properly wash their hands before handling produce and be free of open cuts or wounds on their extremities.
13. Restroom facilities with soap and warm water should be readily accessible to anyone working in a garden.
14. Workers should protect produce from cross-contamination by ensuring that it does not come into contact with equipment, gloves or other articles that may have become contaminated with compost or other materials.

